

STATINTL

Thurmond and Fulbright Clash Over Memo on Rightist Speakers

Associated Press

An angry exchange broke out in the Senate last night over military sponsorship of public forums featuring what Sen. J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) called "radical, right-wing speakers."

Fulbright, replying to Sen. Strom Thurmond (D-S.C.) said he opposed such sponsorship because of his "strong belief in the principle of military subordination to civilian control."

Thurmond had attacked Fulbright's position as a "clandestine assault on the fundamental foundations of our republic."

The exchange centered on a confidential memorandum prepared by Fulbright and sent recently to Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara

and President Kennedy. In it, Fulbright said the speakers at these military-sponsored meetings equate "social legislation with socialism and the latter with communism."

Fulbright Defends Self

In attacking the position of Fulbright, Thurmond inserted into the Congressional Record a memorandum that appeared to be the one Fulbright had sent to McNamara and Kennedy.

Fulbright then arose, defended his position, and inserted his memorandum into the record. The Thurmond version was almost identical to the one Fulbright handed Senate clerks.

"The implication of this document goes far beyond a mere attack on our military leaders," Thurmond had told the Senate. "It constitutes a clandestine assault on the fundamental foundations of our republic. It is a smear campaign, utilizing innuendo based on unsubstantiated allegations."

He concluded by saying it is imperative the Senate Armed Services Committee immediately "undertake a full-scale investigation of this entire matter."

Pentagon Blamed

The Fulbright memo, excerpts of which had been published in newspapers some time ago, was reported to have resulted in a new Defense Department directive restricting the military's role at meetings in which political issues are discussed.

At the time, Fulbright blamed the Pentagon for "leaking" excerpts to the press and refused to make public

what he termed his purely personal memo at the time.

Fulbright told the Senate yesterday he received what he called an "ultimatum" from Thurmond on July 21 "demanding that he be provided with a copy of the memorandum within the next hour."

"Aside from the fact that I had no copy of the memorandum at the time," Fulbright said, "I was unwilling to open my private files in response to so impertinent a letter."

He said he was "very much astonished" at the interest in his criticism of propaganda activities by military personnel and was unaware the subject "could arouse great controversy."

"There has been a strong tradition in this country that it is not the function of the military to educate the public on political issues," he said.

He referred to yesterday's criticism by Thurmond, in which Sens. Earl E. Mundt (R-S.D.) and Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) joined, and thanked these Senators "for disabusing me of my erroneous judgment that the principles of civilian control of the armed services is one which is accepted by all Americans."

He said he was making the abundant public "dispel the fears of those who have persuaded themselves that the memorandum contains material which is sinister, subversive or sensational."

The memo stated its purpose alerting the Defense Department to military-sponsored programs having the central theme that "the military is not the exclusive guardian to this country is against communism infiltration."